12

A Grain of Gratitude.

A SERMON

Occaſioned by the DEATH of

That Venerable, Learned, Pious, and Judicious Divine

The Rev. JOHN GILL, D. D.

Who departed this Life October 14, 1771,

Aged SEVENTY-FOUR.

Preached to a Church of CHRIST meeting in *Red-Croſs-Street*, on the Lord's Day, November 3, and publiſhed at the Requeſt of the ſaid Church.

By THOMAS CRANER.

How are the Mighty fallen! 2 Sam. i. 19.

He being dead, yet ſpeaketh. Heb. xi. 4.

The Memory of the Juſt is bleſſed. Prov. x. 7.

The Righteous periſh, and no Man layeth it to Heart; and merciful Men are taken away, none conſidering that the Righteous is taken from the Evil to come. Iſ. lvii. 1, 2.

LONDON:

Printed for J. GURNEY, No. 54, Holborn, oppoſite Hatton-Street; and E. EYNON, at the Corner of Caſtle-Alley, Royal Exchange, in Threadneedle-Street.

[Price Six Pence.]

W. Musgrave.

To

The CHURCH of CHRIST

Meeting in Red-Croſs-Street, London,

This

PLAIN DISCOURSE

Is humbly inſcribed

By their Sincere Friend

and Servant in the Goſpel,

THOMAS CRANER.

2 SAM. iii. 38.

And the king ſaid unto his ſervants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen in Iſrael?

IN this context, we have a very eloquent oration, which the king of Iſrael made at the grave of Abner; and the words I have now read are an expoſtulary addreſs to his courtiers, when he was returned from the funeral of that truly noble and great perſonage, whoſe death he lamented; and herein he gives a reaſon why he mourned, *Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen in Iſrael?* A prince, being of the royal family; his father was Saul's uncle, and he nearly related to him, being his own couſin. A great man, one of great abilities, a valiant and ſkilful general, of great wiſdom and parts, whoſe fall was a public loſs and matter of lamentation, as is the death of any perſon, eſpecially ſuch as are uſeful to ſociety. That it is appointed for all once to die, the oracles of eternal truth declare; yea, and holy Job aſſures us he certainly knew, *That God would bring him to death and to the houſe ap-*

pointed for all living. Wherefore he ſaith, *If I wait the grave is my houſe.* This is the houſe, the common houſe appointed for all the apoſtate ſons of Adam, for by *this man Adam, ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin,* ſo *that death is the juſt wages of ſin,* the due deſert thereof. We no ſooner begin to live, but we begin to die; and no ſooner did ſin enter, but death came in with it, and has reigned, oh! reigned indeed, even *over ſuch as have not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion*; for whereſoever ſin has any being, death will have a footing, and tho' the believer, the truly godly and juſt man, lives not in ſin, but is *dead to ſin by the body of Chriſt,* yet becauſe ſin has a being in him, he alſo, as well as others, muſt die, for there is no getting rid of this troubleſome inmate, but by the diſſolution of the union between ſoul and body; hereby the relation to the firſt Adam is broke and intirely diſſolved, which being broken, his image is for ever dropt, and never to be taken up more.

While in this preſent ſtate the chriſtian groans being burdened with a body of ſin, the trials of life, the ſnares of this world, and the temptations of ſatan, whoſe fiery darts are very troubleſome and afflictive: but when death has done its office, the chriſtian is quite delivered from every burden, freed from every trial, and out of the reach of every

every temptation, and may with propriety ſing, as expreſs'd by the late Dr. WATTS:

Sin my worſt enemy before,
Shall vex my eyes and ears no more,
My inward foes ſhall all be ſlain,
Nor ſatan break my peace again.

It is true, death is formidable, and very terrible to ſome who ſhudder at the ſight of an opened grave, or viewing of a dry ſkull; yet if we attend unto, and regard the volume of inſpiration, there is no occaſion for the believer to be afraid of the king of terrors, for their JESUS has ranſomed them from the power of the grave, and redeemed them from hell, ſo that the chriſtian may triumph over death, the laſt enemy, ſaying, *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

But the words of our text was ſpoken by the Iſraelitiſh monarch, upon the occaſion of the death of one whom he ſtiles a prince and a great man, whoſe deceaſe being really awful and melancholy, made the royal prophet addreſs his courtiers and his people in this pathetic and plaintive ſtrain. The connexion of them, with what goes before, is ſo very eaſy to be gathered, it would be an affront to an intelligent and diligent reader, to make any remarks thereon. Therefore, I ſhall not trouble you therewith, nor with any account of the pedi-

gree, courage, valor, magnanimity, military ſkill, and great exploits of this great commander, whoſe death, by the perfidious, treacherous, and murderous hands of Joab, made David expreſs himſelf ſaying, *Know ye not that a prince and a great man is fallen in Iſrael?* But I ſhall accommodate them to the mournful occurrence which has lately taken place, even the death of the venerable, learned, pious, and judicious Dr. GILL, whoſe death I eſteem a loſs, a very great loſs, not only to his mourning family, and the church over which the Holy Ghoſt had made, and continued him, an overſeer for ſo many years, but it is a public loſs to the whole intereſt of a Divine JESUS.

And by his death we have a freſh evidence, that however great, learned, and judicious, however good and gracious, however uſeful and deſirable any perſon is, he is not exempted from the ſtroke of death, nor can any deliver himſelf from the devouring grave; this is our laſt retreat, therefore the royal pſalmiſt ſaith, *What man is he that liveth and ſhall not ſee death! ſhall he deliver his ſoul from the hand of the grave?*

And the prophet Zechariah ſpeaking upon the ſame occaſion ſaith, *Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?* intimating, that the ſame might live to a great, to a good old

old age, as the antidiluvian Patriarchs, and ſome of the worthies in after ages ſince, even to this day, yet when they had done their work, and ſerved the Lord in their generation, they fell aſleep, and their ſouls enter *where the weary are at reſt, and where the wicked ceaſe from troubling of them*, and their bodies are committed to the grave, which is a peaceable habitation, a quiet and ſafe reſting-place. Here the miniſter and the chriſtian is diſburdened of every care, and delivered, yea, compleatly ſet free from every care, and receive a final releaſe from every painful affliction. All weakneſs of every kind is removed from them, there is nothing now can diſturb their peace, nothing can annoy them now, for there is no ſerpent in all the heavenly paradiſe, wherefore the royal preacher ſaith, *He praiſed the dead who were already dead, more than the living, who are yet alive.* It is certain that the godly, the righteous dead, are thoſe that this noble perſonage doth praiſe, who are taken away from the evil to come, and are free from all the oppoſition and oppreſſion they met with from their enemies, while here. Theſe that die in the Lord, are much more happy than the living ſaints, for they are not only delivered from the hand of all their enemies from all kind of trouble, no more liable to darkneſs, deſertion, temptation and affliction, and are delivered from all their doubts and fears, but they are with Chriſt,

which

which is far, very far better; *Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord: yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them.*

Now as they have no ſin within, nor temptation, nor trial without, to diſquiet them, all conflicts are eternally over, they may ſing and ſay,

Thou cruel executioner
Vile ſatan, what ſayeſt thou?
I ſcorn thy arts, threats, and aſſaults,
Thou canſt not reach me now.

O happy, thrice happy ſoul, that is ſafe lodged in Jeſus' boſom, that is ſafe arriv'd in thoſe bliſsful regions, where they ſhall for ever enjoy communion with their beloved, and ſhall ſee him as he is. Oh! who can conceive or imagine the delight, the heavenly joy it muſt afford to behold the glory of Chriſt, to leave dull mortality behind, and quite eſcape this vale of tears, and get above an enſnaring world, and from all theſe territories of diſquietude, to a paradiſe of reſt, and joyn *the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven in the Lamb's book of life*, and go in concert *with the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, and join the innumerable company of holy angels*, and rejoice in the fruition of preſent happineſs, and in the aſſured addition to their bliſs,

when

when their dear *Lord Jeſus himſelf ſhall come in the clouds, and deſcend from heaven,* and ſhall break up thoſe treaſures and ſprings, thoſe mines of grace and glory, which he hath in reverſion *for all them that love his appearing.* All which was the expectance of this excellent perſon, this great man of God, whoſe death we lament, *who came to his grave in a full age, like as a ſhock of corn in his ſeaſon*; ſo that we may with the greateſt propriety adopt the words of our text, and ſay, *Know ye not, that a prince and a great man is fallen in Iſrael!* In diſcourſing on theſe words, I ſhall

I. Conſider, what in a goſpel-ſenſe we are to underſtand by *Iſrael,* and why ſo called.

II. Conſider, what is ſaid to take place in Iſrael, viz. *That a prince and a great man is fallen in Iſrael.* I am,

1. To conſider what is meant by Iſrael, for it is a name divinely bleſſed.

This name Iſrael, is not to be limitted to the ſons of Jacob, nor confined to the old teſtament church, which is frequently ſo ſtiled in the ſcripture of truth, *Behold, he that keepeth Iſrael, ſhall neither ſlumber, nor ſleep. If it had not been the Lord, who was on our ſide, now may Iſrael ſay. As for ſuch as turn aſide unto their crooked ways, the Lord ſhall*

lead

lead them forth with the workers of iniquity; but peace ſhall be upon Iſrael. And as it is given to and affixed upon the church of God, to diſtinguiſh it from the world, ſo it is in a peculiar manner adopted by the Holy Ghoſt, in the new teſtament, who calls the church in goſpel times by the ſame name, ſaying, *As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, on the Iſrael of God.* Thus the new-teſtament church being made partakers of, and ſaved by the ſame grace, having the ſame faith, are members of the ſame body, and heirs of the ſame ſalvation, *We believe we ſhall be ſaved by the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, even as they*; therefore are called after, and bare the ſame name Iſrael. And truly, it is a diſcriminating name, by which the goſpel-church is eternally diſtinguiſhed from the world. But why is the church ſo called? The church is, and may with propriety be called Iſrael. Becauſe,

1. Iſrael was the object of God's love and delight. Moſes inſtructed the people of his care into this doctrine, when he tells, that *The Lord did not ſet his love upon them*, for reaſons which he aſſigns, *but becauſe the Lord loved you.* And again, he aſſured them it was only, *Becauſe the Lord had a delight in their fathers to love them.* And he further informs them, *That he loved the people*, that is, the people of Iſrael.

And

And how much more has he manifeſted his love to his ſpiritual Iſrael, who are a ſpecial people; his church, whom he hath loved with an everlaſting love: yea, it is ſaid of Chriſt, *That he loved the church, and gave himſelf for it.* This love is free, abſolute, and unconditional; therefore we have that doxology, *To him that hath loved us, and waſhed us.* Love goes before waſhing, and it is becauſe he loved his church, therefore he cleanſes them from all ſin. This love of God and Chriſt is unchangeable, and unmerited; it was not purchaſed at any rate; no, this love is ſo free as it was not purchaſed by the blood, ſuffering, and righteouſneſs of the redeemer. God's love to his people in Chriſt, is the original fountain and ſpring of all grace and glory to the church. He ſo loved, that he gave, not made an offer, or propoſal, or tender of his ſon, but *He gave his only begotten ſon*, becauſe of the complacency and delight he had in them; they are his Jedediah's, his Hepzibah's, becauſe of his love to them, and delight he has in them. This love is that by which the church is diſtinguiſhed, it is ancient and unremitted love, it is love without beginning, or without end; it is unextinguiſhable, unparallelled love; love not to be matched by men or angels; it is ſuch love as there is, there can be, no ſeparation from; nothing, ſaith the volume of inſpiration, can ſeparate God's elect from his love; *I am perſuaded there is*

nothing can ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus. The complete fruition of God in endleſs felicity, as well as communion with him here, cannot proceed from any other cauſe than divine love. And truly to enjoy God, and drink in the delights of his eternal love, ſo as to be transformed in to his image by the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt here, and to behold his glory hereafter, is the higheſt ſummit of bliſs a finite being can be raiſed unto. But,

2. Becauſe as Iſrael was choſen of God, to be a peculiar and ſpecial people, ſo ſaith the word, *For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath choſen thee to be a ſpecial people unto himſelf.* Thus the church is ſtiled *A choſen generation*, and a ſaid to be *Choſen in Chriſt before the foundation of the world*; loved in Chriſt, conſequently choſen in Chriſt before the world began. Head and members, Chriſt and his church, were conſidered together in the womb of election, were loved alike, *Thou haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me*; and choſe together above the conſideration of the fall, according to what the Apoſtle ſaith, *The children not being yet born, nor having done either good or evil, that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand.* That the elect were choſen in Chriſt, as conſidered in the pure maſs, is evident to me; for if head and members

bers were viewed together, and choſe together, and Chriſt's human nature was choſen from among the people, this human nature which was ordained into union with the Son of God, and in the fulneſs of time aſſumed by him, was never a part of the fallen race of Adam; therefore, as he the head was, ſo muſt the body be; he was the firſt-born of election, the foundation thereof. But Chriſt-man-nature was never choſen under the conſideration of being a part of the corrupted maſs of mankind in any reſpect, therefore election could not paſs upon the corrupt maſs, becauſe Chriſt muſt then be choſen out of it, and if ſo, the other elect would not be choſen as ſuch in him. *According as he hath* (not he will) *choſen us in him*; not to be in him, but viewed in him, as having a being and ſtanding in him in the very act of election.

The doctrine of perſonal and eternal election, is a doctrine of the old faſhioned book the Bible; it is a doctrine which the Old Teſtament church was well inſtructed in, and acquainted with. It is a glorious doctrine, which is inſiſted upon, and moſt ſtrongly inculcated, in the New; it is a doctrine, that is full of comfort to believers, and however it may be neglected, and the preachers thereof deſpiſed, it is *The foundation of God which ſtands ſure*, and will maugre all the oppoſition it

meets with from hell and earth. The purpoſe of God according to election muſt ſtand, let men and devils do their worſt. But

3. Iſrael was a bleſſed people, therefore the Lord reſtrained the mad prophet from curſing, and gives this as the reaſon, *They are bleſſed*; it is not ſaid, they ſhall be bleſſed, but they now are bleſſed, even at this time, and ſhall be bleſſed, and none ſhall reverſe the bleſſing, for all the bleſſings beſtowed upon Iſrael were firm and ſure, *and not one thing failed of all the good things* which the Lord bleſſed them with. So is the goſpel-church, God's ſpiritual Iſrael, *Bleſſed with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenlies in Chriſt*, and neither ſin nor ſatan can alter or revoke them; for if ſin or ſatan could have diſinherited the church, ſhe had been diſinherited long ago, for ſhe ſinned and fell in Adam, as well as the reſt, and loſt the all ſhe had in his hands, and was deſerving of and under the curſe of the broken law. But the Lord turned the curſe into a bleſſing unto thee, becauſe the Lord thy God loved thee; *Oh! happy the people who are in ſuch a caſe, happy the people whoſe God is the Lord.* And as Iſrael was bleſſed with all the immunities of the land of Canaan, for the church of God is bleſſed with peace and pardon, with a juſtifying righteouſneſs, and with the non-imputation of ſin; *Bleſſed is he whoſe tranſgreſſion*

is

is forgiven, whoſe ſin is covered; bleſſed is the man unto whom the Lord imputed not iniquity; it is further added in the ſcripture, oh! my ſoul, catch the pleaſing ſound, *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither has he ſeen perverſeneſs in Iſrael*, becauſe God's Iſrael ſtands under the covert of Chriſt's godlike righteouſneſs, and is all fair and without ſpot, being completely juſtified from all things, and ſo is without fault before the throne. And truly all ſpiritual bleſſings are ſecured in Chriſt's hands for his people; whatever they can wiſh for or want, all that can conduce to make them comfortable in time, and happy everlaſtingly, happy through the endleſs ages of eternity; for their dear Lord Jeſus will receive them at laſt with this joyful welcome, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

4. Iſrael was the Lord's peculiar treaſure. *For the Lord has choſen Jacob unto himſelf; and Iſrael for his peculiar treaſure.* And again it is ſaid, *Ye ſhall be a peculiar treaſure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine.* So the goſpel church is called, becauſe ſhe is his treaſure, which he values highly, and prizes at a very great rate. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treaſure hid in a field; which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and ſelleth all that he hath, and buyeth*

buyeth that field: yea, where the treaſure is, there the heart will be alſo. Thus God's heart is upon his people, his church, his *Saints they are the excellent of the earth, among whom is all his delights*; his heart was engaged for them from of old: yea, it is fixed upon them, for they are his jewels, on whom he loves to manifeſt the riches of his grace, and to diſplay his power, they are exceeding precious in his ſight. No man can delight ſo much in his treaſure, as the Lord doth in his people, his church, his bride; *His delights were with the ſons of men.* He eſteems his people ſo greatly, as he has not only exerted the arm of his power, to defend and deliver them from their enemies, but he has expended his blood, his precious Godlike blood, to redeem them; therefore he will not part with them at any rate, *None ſhall pluck them out of his hand*; ſo they are ſafe for time, and ſafe for eternity: for *He that gives grace, will give glory, becauſe whom he loves, he loves to the end.* And he delights to tell them how he loves them; and to let them know, that he accounts them his treaſure, and that his heart is ſo ſet upon them, as that he rejoices to do them good; therefore he will preſerve them from every evil thing to his kingdom and glory. But,

5. Iſrael was a poor and an afflicted people: how affectionately doth the Lord ſpeak concerning this people,

people, " *I leave among you a poor and afflicted* " *people*;" and again, " *I have ſeen, ſurely ſeen, the* " *affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and* " *have heard their cry, by reaſon of their taſk-* " *maſters: for I know their ſorrows.*" So the Lord's people, the church, is a poor and an afflicted people, *through manifold afflictions and tribulations they muſt enter the kingdom.* And truly, as Iſrael was afflicted by the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Amorites, and others, ſo God's ſpiritual Iſrael now are afflicted with a body of ſin, that troubleſome inmate afflicts them greatly; this plague of the heart ſorely grieves them, and is the plague of their lives, oft makes them grown being burdened. Oh! how are they diſtreſs'd by the workings of indwelling ſin, and made to cry out, *O wretched man!* yea to chide themſelves, and to ſay, *ſurely I am more brutiſh than any man, yea even as a very beaſt before thee*; which is a ſore, a very ſore affliction to them, and frequently cauſes them to ſay, *O! that I had the wings of a dove, then would I flie away, and be at reſt!* For here they have no reſt, no quiet; tireſome days, and weariſome nights are appointed to them, ſo as they mourn in their complaint; and make a noiſe, and are weary with their groanings, ſo as they long to be delivered from this body of death, this dead weight which preſſes them down. Sometimes they are grievouſly afflicted with the temptations of ſatan, his fiery darts

darts are very, yea exceedingly troubleſome, the poiſon thereof drink up their ſpirits; his wiles are ſo many, and he ſo unwearied in his attacks, as frequently makes them to deſire to be where the *weary are at reſt, and the wicked ceaſe from troubling; where the inhabitants are not ſick, and the people that dwell there have their iniquity freely forgiven them.* At other times the ſnares of the world, and the trials of life, greatly diſtreſs the poor Chriſtian, for many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord will ſupport under and deliver out of all. But,

6. Iſrael was the Lord's inheritance: *Bleſſed is the nation whoſe God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath choſen for his inheritance.* The Lord's people are *his portion, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. The Lord will not forſake his inheritance. Bleſſed be Iſrael mine inheritance*; and of them it is remarked, *they be thy people, and thine inheritance.* So the church in goſpel times is the Lord's inheritance; and as Naboth would not part with his inheritance to Ahab, though he offered either to give him the worth of it in money, or a better vineyard for it; and the reaſon he aſſigns for his not parting with it was, becauſe it is the inheritance of his fathers. *And Ahab ſpake unto Naboh, ſaying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, becauſe it is near unto my houſe, and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than*

than it: or, if it ſeem good unto thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. And Naboth ſaid to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I ſhould give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. Juſt ſo it is with reſpect to the church; it is Chriſt's lot. The people which his father gave to him, they are the lot of his inheritance, the purchaſed poſſeſſion, the church which he hath purchaſed with his own blood, ſo that they are dear to him. *He hates putting away, nay, he will not caſt off his people; he will not forſake his inheritance; he takes pleaſure in his people*, and will not reject them; whoever caſts them off, he will not, for they are his inheritance: *Iſrael is the rod of his inheritance*, which he hath choſen and values as a goodly heritage; *The lines are fallen unto me in pleaſant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage.* Again,

7. Iſrael was an holy people. *Thou art an holy people to the Lord thy God:* yea, *The Lord ſhall eſtabliſh thee an holy people to himſelf*; this is over and over aſſerted of Iſrael in the ſcriptures. Yea, Iſrael is called holineſs to the Lord; *Iſrael was holineſs to the Lord, and the people of his holineſs*, whom he had ſeparated from others, and ſet apart for himſelf, to be an holy people above all others. So the ſpiritual Iſrael, the church his people, are choſen in Chriſt to be holy, and he is made ſanctification to them; and they are ſanctified in him,

being choſen unto holineſs, *He has given himſelf for his church, that he might ſanctify it, and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water, by the word*; that he might preſent it a glorious *church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; but that it ſhould be holy and without blemiſh.* Accordingly he ſends the Holy Ghoſt into their hearts in regeneration, who implants an holy principle in them, and calls them with an holy calling; yea, calls them unto holineſs both in heart, lip, and life: ſo under his influences they live holy lives and converſations; for the *Grace of God teaches, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſt, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*; for without holineſs no man can ſee or enjoy the Lord, either here or hereafter.

8. The goſpel-church is called Iſrael, becauſe of her relation to Jeſus Chriſt; for this appellation properly belongs to him, as he is the antitype of him that was ſo ſtiled: *Thy name ſhall be called no more Jacob, but Iſrael.* So of the Meſſiah, it is ſaid, *Thou art my ſervant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified:* which was literally fulfilled when Jeſus ſaid, *I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finiſhed the work thou gaveſt me to do.* Wherefore as this name was given to him, and he called by it, as the head and repreſentative of the whole ſpiritual Iſrael, the church of God, who bear the ſame name, becauſe of her marriage-union to him,

who

who as a prince has power with God and men, and doth prevail. Sometimes we find that the church is called by his name, and truly this is no wonder that the bride, the wife, the ſpouſe, ſhould be called by her huſband's name: *This is the name whereby He ſhall be called, the Lord our righteouſneſs; this is the name whereby She ſhall be called, the Lord our righteouſneſs.* Now, as huſband and wife bear the ſame name, ſo does Chriſt and the church, *ſo alſo is Chriſt.* Chriſt and his church are one, as head and members are one; the union between Chriſt and the church is exceeding near, ſo near, that there is no union to be compared with it; the union between huſband and wife, head and members is near, but not ſo near as that between Chriſt and the elect. For they are ſo one, as he is called by the church's name Iſrael, which is moſt aſtoniſhing; and is to ſhew, that he was her ſubſtitute and ſurety, came into her law-place, and exchanged conditions with her; was made what ſhe was, and ſhe is made what he is. For thus we read, *He hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* But,

9. The church is called Iſrael, becauſe of her weakneſs. As the church doth, at leaſt it ſhould, conſiſt of ſpiritual perſons, the more ſpiritual any one is, the more ſenſible they are of their own

weakneſs and danger, are ready to think that they are liable to be cruſhed by every enemy. The true church has no might, and is ſo very weak as ſhe many times knows not what to do. Her enemies ſhe finds lively and ſtrong, and ſhe without any ſtrength at all; therefore likened to a woman, and to a woman that is ready to be devoured, cruſhed and deſtroyed by her potent and numerous foes, againſt whom ſhe is no match, no way able to graple with them, but liable to be trampled upon as a poor contemptible worm; yet, the Lord ſaith, *fear not:* and aſſures her, that *no weapon that is formed againſt her ſhall proſper*, nor ſhall any of the counſels of her enemy prevail; for the eye of Chriſt her Lord is always upon her, and as ſhe is his Beulah, he will exert his power when ſhe is in the greateſt trouble. His power ſhall be made perfect in her weakneſs, his ſtrength is ſufficient to ſupport her, and his grace to ſupply all her wants; yea, the power of Chriſt ſhall ſo reſt upon her, as ſhe ſhall be *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might:* therefore he ſaith, *Fear not, for I am with thee; be not diſmayed, for I am thy God; I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs.* Glorious declaration indeed! What can the believer deſire more; he has no reaſon to fear what man or devils can do unto him, for however weak he is in himſelf, and ſenſible thereof, ſo as to be filled with fears,

fears, yet he has no reaſon *to fear man that ſhall die, or the ſon of man that ſhall be as graſs*, nor any other enemy whatſoever; for God has laid her help upon one that is moſt mighty, and exalted one choſen out of the people, who is able to ſave to the uttermoſt; therefore he will perfect that which concerns his church, will carry on the work of faith with power, and cauſe her to come up out of the wilderneſs, leaning upon his invincible, his almighty arm, and preſent her faultleſs before the throne of his glory with exceeding joy.

10, and laſtly. To obſerve, that Iſrael was a diſtinguiſhed people from all the nations of the world. *Lo! the people ſhall dwell alone, and ſhall not be reckoned among the nations.* Iſrael was diſtinguiſhed by circumciſion, ſo the ſpiritual Iſrael by regeneration; for *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumciſion, which is outward in the fleſh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and the circumciſion is that of the heart, in the ſpirit, and not in the letter, whoſe praiſe is not of men, but of God.* As Iſrael of old was favoured with, and diſtinguiſhed by viſible tokens of God's preſence; for *He went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way, and by night, in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night.* The pillar departed not from them, but abode on them, and came with them into Canaan's land;

land; ſo the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the antitype of this pillar, is in the midſt of his people now, is always with them, even to the end; he will never depart from his people, but will bring them ſafe to glory. The church is a people called out of the world, to worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth, and is ſeparated from the men of the world, to have and hold communion with the Lord; *for what concord hath Chriſt with belial?* How is it poſſible for the quickened members of Chriſt to have communion with perſons dead in treſpaſſes and ſins? Nor ſhould they be conformed to the world, nor ſymbolize with them in doctrine, nor join with them in their worſhip; but it is the buſineſs of all that profeſs to be the diſciples of Chriſt, the followers of the lamb, the true Iſrael, to come out from the world, to ſeparate from it, and not to mingle with the people of the world in their worſhip, nor be joined in affinity unto them, nor conform to the manner of the day. Occaſional conformity to the world in religion, is a moſt deſtructive thing; wherefore the Lord ſaith, *Come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and you ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.* I proceed

Secondly, To conſider what doth conſtitute a great man in the church or ſpiritual Iſrael. I humbly apprehend the following things are requiſite, as

1. A great

1. A great meaſure of grace. We read in the ſcripture of great grace; *and to every one is given grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt*; ſo ſome have larger meaſures of grace than others, and are ſtrong in faith as Abraham, *who was ſtrong in faith and gave glory to God.* Others have a leſſer meaſure, and ſo are weak in the faith. Wherefore a great man in the church (as true grace is ſpiritual light in the underſtanding) is one that has a great inſight into the plague of his own heart, the ſpirituality of the law, and a clear and large view and great knowledge of the perſon and fullneſs of Chriſt; the fullneſs of fitneſs and ability to ſave from ſin and wrath, to redeem from the curſe of the law, ſo as he reſts the whole weight of his ſalvation on Chriſt alone, knowing that there is ſalvation in no other, nor any other name under heaven by which he can be ſaved. The perſon is made alive by grace, for it is life to the ſoul, as well as light; hence the apoſtle ſaith, *You hath he quickened who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*; and likewiſe, *God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.* There was a gift of all kind of grace to Chriſt before the world began, therefore the apoſtle ſaith, *Grace was given in Chriſt*, not only purpoſed, but purpoſed and given; ſo that there was not only a purpoſe of grace in the heart of God,

and

and a promiſe of it, but there was a real donation of grace to Chriſt, and to the elect in Chriſt in eternity, for they were repreſented by him, and united to him ſo early; hence the inſpired writer, in a kind of rapture, cries out, *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places* (or things) *in Chriſt.* But,

2. He is one not only that is a partaker of great grace, but has great light into, and a good underſtanding of the great things of God's law, the great and glorious doctrines of the everlaſting goſpel. And truly the venerable perſon, to whoſe memory this diſcourſe is ſacred, was favoured with great light indeed into the great doctrines of the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God, and ſteadily adhered to them, and abode firm by them to his death, like a brazen wall and pillar, and earneſtly contend for them, and would not give place to an adverſary one hair's breadth. The great doctrines which this great man particularly maintained, were the foundation-doctrines of the goſpel, ſuch as the doctrine of the Trinity, of the true proper and real Sonſhip of Chriſt; the doctrine of God's everlaſting love to Chriſt and his people in Chriſt, and as he loved them early, ſo he loved them always, and there never was a vacuity or want of love in his heart to them from everlaſting to everlaſting,

laſting, for they were the objects of his eternal complacency and delight; the doctrine of particular and eternal election, and that the objects of election were conſidered in the pure maſs of creatureſhip in the act of election; alſo the doctrine of the elect's eternal union unto Chriſt; the great doctrine of the everlaſting covenant, *which covenant is ordered in all things, and ſure*; the precious and glorious doctrine of eternal juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; of the incarnation of the Son of God; of the free, full, and eternal redemption by the blood of Chriſt; of peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, and atonement through him; the great doctrine of efficacious grace in regeneration, converſion, ſanctification, and the final perſeverance of the ſaints; the doctrines of ſpecial faith and good works, as a fruit of that *faith which is of the operation of God*; the abſolute neceſſity of the Holy Ghoſt's work in the application of ſalvation, to make believers meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light; the doctrine of the reſurrection, eternal judgment, and final glorification, and eternal ſalvation of all the elect of God; theſe, together with the ſeveral doctrines depending thereon, and flowing from them, were what this eminent man of God did take pleaſure to defend and maintain. He was one that was valiant for theſe precious truths of Chriſt, as his printed works do ſhew, for by them, though he

is no more, he ſpeaketh, and will ſpeak to the lateſt ages of time; and I doubt not but people yet unborn will ariſe and bleſs God for his works.

3. Great gifts, and a large meaſure of the Spirit of God, furniſhing one with ability to hand out the myſteries of divine grace to the edification of the church of God, and the converſion of ſinners, are requiſite to conſtitute a great man in Iſrael. When Chriſt aſcended up on high he received gifts for men, *Thou haſt aſcended up on high, thou haſt led captivity captive, thou haſt received gifts for men.* And as he received them for men, he being exalted at the right hand of God, he gives them to the men for whom he did receive them. *Therefore being at the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this which you ſee and hear.* By theſe ſpiritual gifts, I mean a peculiar, ſpiritual power, endowment, ſkill, and ability, wiſely to manage the goſpel, in the adminiſtration thereof, unto the advantage and furtherance of the truth, eſpecially in the preaching and defence of it when called thereunto. Thus ſome are extraordinary, and others are ordinary, and ſome are ſet in the church for the defence of the goſpel, as the apoſtle to the gentiles ſaith he was, *I am ſet for the defence of the goſpel.* This great man of God, Paul, was in an eminent manner qualified to maintain the doctrines

doctrines of Chriſt, both by preaching, diſputing, and writing in the defence thereof. How laborious and aſſiduous was this champion in his maſter's work, is evident to all that are acquainted with the New Teſtament; from thence it appears, that *He had both a mouth and wiſdom, which all his adverſaries were not able to gain-ſay, or reſiſt.* And with ſuch a large meaſure of gifts and ſpiritual abilities, was the late Dr. GILL favoured, as rendered him capable of ſtriving for the faith of the goſpel for more than fifty years, in a firm and uniform way. He was in no wiſe aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, but ſtood his ground with the greateſt intrepidity againſt the many adverſaries of the truth againſt whom he drew his pen. His many voluminous writings, eſpecially his Expoſition both of the Old and New Teſtament, ſhew, that he was ſuch a workman, as, I think, I may venture to ſay, without any diſparagement to any either dead or living, who have done excellently, that he has excelled them all. His Body of Divinity, both doctrinal and practical, ſhews he was well ſkilled in the word of righteouſneſs. How judiciouſly, how ſolidly doth he explain the extent and the intent of the divine law, and ſhew its uſe to both believer and unbeliever, maintain its authority over every deſcendant of apoſtate Adam, and declare, *That whatſoever the law ſaith, it is to them that are under it.* He boldly aſſerted, that

the moral law was a ſtanding and eternal rule of righteouſneſs, and that believers *are not without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt*; therefore though he preached the great doctrine of ſovereign grace, and publiſhed the glad tydings of free, full, and eternal ſalvation, as flowing from the grace of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, that ſinners are ſaved alone by grace; he alſo maintained, and ſtrenuouſly aſſerted, that the law in the hand of Chriſt, is a rule of life and converſation to the ſaints, and ſo did not make void the law, but eſtabliſhed it upon a right foundation. His gifts greatly ſhone with peculiar luſtre in preaching the word. How wiſely, how accurately was he wont to diſtinguiſh between the law and the goſpel; he did not blend law and goſpel together, nor was he yea, and nay, but did *rightly divide the word of truth, giving to every one their portion in due ſeaſon.* He did not give the ſaint the ſinner's portion, making the hearts of the righteous ſad, nor did he give the ſinner the ſaint's part, but the goſpel-trumpet by him gave a certain diſtinct ſound, which plainly ſhewed he was a great man. *But, alas! how are the mighty fallen!*

4. A great and gracious experience of the power of the great doctrines of the everlaſting goſpel upon his own ſoul, is requiſite to conſtitute a great man in the church. Some in the goſpel-church,

church, both in a public and private character, have a larger experience of the ſweetneſs and efficacy of divine truth than others, and find the great doctrines of the bible, the food of their ſouls, the ſtrength of their hearts, and the joy of their lives. What comfort, what ſatisfaction, what pleaſure, what delight, do ſome enjoy when the Holy Ghoſt directs their hearts into the antiquity, freeneſs, fulneſs, immutability, and duration of divine love, and gives them to ſee their intereſt therein; and that this love of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Divine Spirit, is the ſole cauſe, the only, the original fountain of eternal glory to the church. To have this unparallelled love, which is not to be matched by men or angels, ſhed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghoſt; what ſweet work doth it make, what gracious experience doth it afford of the Lord's loving-kindneſs, who hath *commended his love to us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us.* To be led into the doctrine of eternal election, and the elect's everlaſting union to Chriſt; the ancientneſs of the covenant, in which proviſion was made for the bringing of the *many ſons to glory*, and that the Spirit ſhould be given in conſequence of the filial relation of God's elect to him, to take up his abode in the hearts of his people, for *it is becauſe they were ſons, therefore God ſent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts*, by whoſe gracious operation alone they receive all

ſpiritual

ſpiritual bleſſings, and have an experience of the love of God, and enjoy communion with the Father and Chriſt; what pleaſure! what delight muſt this afford! Theſe great and precious doctrines have been found to be ſoul-quickening doctrines to others. Accordingly we find the excellent Mr. Hussey ſaith, "How graciouſly have I felt it, "(it is none of my notions or opinion, but my "faith, my very life to God,) in thoſe times which "the Lord hath ſeaſoned for beholding it! what "encouragements! what experiences! what ſweet-"ning views of the King in his beauty have I "enjoyed through the fleeting moments of pre-"ſenting it, and that under goſpel-ſeals of the "Lord the Spirit, and this through faith receiving "what was a certain thing before it."

And truly, theſe great and glorious doctrines, theſe foundation-truths of the goſpel, the great man whoſe works will praiſe him in the gates of Zion, had a large and rich experience of. They were the ſtay of his ſoul, and the comfort of his heart when living, and afforded him everlaſting conſolation in the view of death and eternity. He was directed by the Divine Comforter into the love of the Father and Son, and found Chriſt to be his life, and exceeding precious to him; the ancient things of God's counſel, covenant, and love, even theſe precious truths which are derided

derided by ſome, and he was peculiarly ſtrenuous in defending, he told me were the comfort of his ſoul, and the foundation of his hope; and being thus bleſſed with the enjoyment of ſpiritual union with Chriſt, and a full aſſurance of hope, his conſolation was ſo ſtrong, as he dreaded not any ſtorm or tempeſt which the fury of hell might raiſe to make death appear the king of terrors to him; but his mind was calm and ſerene, his comfort ſtrong, and his joy ſincere, and all ariſing from a gracious experience of the power of the doctrine of the goſpel in the hand of the bleſſed Spirit; *For he knew whom he had believed, and was perſuaded that he was able to keep that which he had committed to him againſt that day*; as he himſelf declared, and his printed works do ſhew, eſpecially his laſt, I mean his Body of Practical Divinity, which is full fraught with ſpiritual and chriſtian experience of the power of thoſe doctrines he had before aſſerted, ſo that doctrine and practice are ſweetly joined together, which will make his memory precious to the ſaints, till ſun and moon are no more.

To a ſpiritual experience, I may add, He was bleſſed with ready utterance and great volubility of ſpeech, ſo that he was apt to teach. With what gravity and majeſty had he uſed to ſtand and feed the church of God! How did his liſtening audience

audience hang as it were upon his lips, while evangelic truth did ſweetly drop from his mellifluous tongue! What an amazing meaſure of ſpiritual experience was he favoured with, as rendered him capable of ſpeaking a word in ſeaſon to weary ſouls. Again,

5. To be well verſed in the ſcriptures and a partaker of a good gift in prayer, *to pray in prayer, to be fervent therein, watching thereunto with all perſeverance*, is another prerequiſite to the great man in Iſrael. And, truly, what is ſaid of Apollos, may be ſaid of this man of God whoſe death we lament; *He was mighty in the ſcriptures, and from a child*, as it is ſaid of Timothy, *he knew the holy ſcriptures*, and had a good underſtanding and ſpiritual inſight into them, and a tenacious memory to retain them, ſo as he was thoroughly furniſhed to every good work. And as to prayer, with what fervency, with what importunity, would he pour out his ſoul to the Lord, and with what familiarity, freedom, and liberty, would he plead with his God! which ſhewed he was highly favoured in being admitted to ſuch nearneſs to the Lord. How would he, Jacob like, wreſtle with God, and, under the Spirit's influence, he was wont to be very urgent for poor Zion, for the peace and proſperity thereof. The edification of ſaints,

and

and the converſion of ſinners, was his great concern.

6. A great inſight into, and a good underſtanding of the order and diſcipline of the church, with magnanimity and courage to ſee that the laws of Chriſt, as Zion's King, are duly executed, are likewiſe neceſſary. He is not only one that labours in word and doctrine, but one that rules well in the houſe of God. And really there is a great glory, a very great beauty in a church, when perſons, whoſe buſineſs it is to go before the church, have a good underſtanding and a ſolid judgment of what ought to be done in the houſe of God, and have knowledge of the laws and ordinances which Chriſt, as King of his church, has appointed for his followers to obſerve, and to be found in the practice of: *To know the form of the houſe, and the faſhion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof*; ſo as to inſtruct others, and to ſee that they keep to the pattern and the ordinances thereof, agreeable to the written word, is another prerequiſite to a great man in the church of God.

7. To be rich in faith, and good works, and of an unblemiſhed character in life and converſation. To be rich towards God, and ſtrong in faith, is the privilege of ſome. Abraham, it is

ſaid, was *ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God*; and when that is the caſe, ſtrong faith will be productive of good works, for it worketh by love, and love to the Lord conſtrains to a practical obſervance of his law, and every duty it requires, ſo as to lead an holy life, in all godlineſs and honeſty, and to have a converſation agreeable to our profeſſion, and to live as becomes the goſpel.

To be carried through life creditably and honourably, and not to foul the waters of the ſanctuary with the feet, or an unbecoming converſation and walk, is a very great mercy; a mercy which our honoured father in the Lord was favoured with. He ſo adorned the doctrine which he preached, and ſo well defended, as he gave no juſt occaſion of offence to either Jew or Gentile, or to the church of God. And when I ſaw him laſt, I obſerved to him what a mercy it was that through ſuch a courſe of years in which he had contended earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the ſaints, he had been kept faithful, and his walk had been ſuch as none of his adverſaries could impeach his character; he ſaid with tears, *It is not I, but the Grace of God that has been with me.*

Laſtly, and to add no more, Wiſdom, prudence, and a good ſhare of natural and acquired abilities, intrepidity, reſolution, firmneſs, and courage,

courage, as not to be ſoon diſmayed, diſcouraged, and daunted, but to be enabled to manage all his affairs, both civil and religious, to walk wiſely towards them that are without; all this, and much more, was to be found in our chriſtian hero. He may with propriety be called one of the valiant men of Iſrael: he was valiant for truth upon earth, and now he is gone to receive the reward of the eternal inheritance; and though the loſs is great to the family, the church, and the intereſt of Chriſt, yet it is his gain, for now he ſees all things as they are; here he ſaw through a glaſs darkly, but now face to face; here he knew only in part, but now he knows all things perfectly.

All I ſhall further ſay, and I am not afraid of exceeding in what I ſay about the deceaſed, but rather fear leſt what I ſhall ſpeak be too little; is, in the firſt place, to take notice of his early piety; for it pleaſed God who ſeparated him from his mother's womb, to call him by his grace in his youthful days, and made Chriſt precious to him; and in the early part of his life, he gave himſelf to a church of Chriſt, who ſoon after called him to exerciſe his gifts, which being approved of, he was by the church ſent forth into the work of the miniſtry, in which he was very diligent and laborious, and ſhewed himſelf *a work-man prepared*

to every good work, one that needed not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2. His inclination for learning was very ſtrong, his induſtry and diligence was exceeding great; he was indefatigable in his ſtudies, ſo as it became a common ſaying with ſome, that a thing was true as ſure as Dr. GILL was in his ſtudy. His capacity was equal to whatever he undertook, and engaged in, ſo that his attainments in literature were very great, eſpecially in that part of learning which he apprehended moſt neceſſary to his ſacred work and character. For the ſcriptures in the original languages in which they were written were very familiar to him, and he acquired through the bleſſing of God ſuch accurate ſkill in all the oriental tongues, that rendered him very uſeful and acceptable in his ſtation; and though his knowledge and underſtanding was great, and his learning ſo very exrenſive, it did not puff him up, nor make him high-minded.

3. His preaching was plain, his reaſoning nervous and ſtrong, his language expreſſive, and his doctrine was the doctrine according to Godlineſs, the truth as it is in Jeſus. But, alas! he is no more! the place which knew him for ſo many years, knows him no more; for he has

finiſhed his courſe, and kept the faith, and is entered into the joy of his Lord, to partake of thoſe rivers of pleaſure, which are everlaſtingly at his right-hand. May this mournful providence be an happy means of awakening us in the ſacred work to be more aſſiduous, more diligent, more laborious for the good of ſouls, that whenever we ſhall have ſerved the Lord, and ſhall have finiſhed our courſe, and be called from this vain world, we may hear the ſentence, *Well done good and faithful ſervants:* and to find the days of our mourning to be ended.

In a word, let us all be concerned to be looking to the Lord, to be fervent in prayer to him that is the repairer of breaches, that an abundant unction of the ſame Spirit may be given to, and reſt upon thoſe that ſurvive, that they may ſtand faſt in one Spirit; yea, let us wreſtle and be very importunate with the Lord of the harveſt, that he will ſend forth more labourers into his vineyard, for the reſidue of the Spirit is with him, who has ſaid, *That he will never leave, nor forſake his people, becauſe it pleaſed the Lord to make them his people.*

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AN

ELEGY

On the DEATH of the

Rev. and Learned JOHN GILL, D.D.

Who departed this Life October 14, 1771,

In the Seventy-fourth Year of his Age.